

NCASES

National Commission for the Accreditation of Special Education Services

Travel Procedures

Procedures for Making Travel Arrangements

Site Reviewers typically make travel arrangements independently. Applicant agencies usually make arrangements for hotel accommodations and may make other arrangements on behalf of the Site Reviewers, such as transportation or meals, and may pay for such arrangements directly.

Site Reviewers will exercise fiscal conservatism and responsibility by selecting cost-effective options for lodging, meals, and transportation. Site Reviewers will use available public transportation such as airport buses, trains, or taxis rather than private car or limousine services.

Air Travel

Site Reviewers will travel at economy rate fares for domestic flights, and will purchase tickets as soon as possible, but preferably not less than 30 days in advance of the date of the visit. NCASES will not reimburse for non-essential transportation expenditures including but not limited to TSA Pre-Check®, upgrades, priority boarding, or excess baggage.

International Travel

Expenses incurred in the preparation for international travel (e.g., passport or visa fees, required immunization costs, etc.) when they are required for an approved, upcoming NCASES Site Visit are considered reasonable and necessary, therefore, they are reimbursable. Such expenses must be reported on the Expense Report, accompanied by itemized receipts.

Travel by Personal or Rental Vehicle

Site Reviewers may travel by personal vehicle. When travel by personal vehicle exceeds 500 miles, reimbursement will be based on either the flat mileage rate or the air economy fare rate, whichever is less. Mileage expenses are reimbursed at a flat mileage rate set by NCASES and consistent with the standard mileage rates set by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The flat rate is intended to cover all operating expenses, including depreciation, insurance, and fuel.

Drivers of personal or rental vehicles must have automobile liability and collision insurance. It is the responsibility of the Site Reviewer to verify and ensure appropriate coverage.

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Commission representatives may secure rental vehicles at competitive rates. Unnecessary rental vehicle upgrades will be considered a personal expense and are nonreimbursable. The individual renting the vehicle must be the Site Reviewer assigned by the Commission to a review (and not a spouse or assistant). The Commission does not carry automobile liability or collision insurance.

Procedures for Travel Warnings and Advisories

NCASES staff will exercise due diligence in identifying possible risk including but not limited to severe weather conditions, concerns about health, safety or welfare, or civil or political unrest in a location. Site Reviewers will assess their personal risk of travel by ascertaining and reviewing information about the destination, including but not limited to potential severe weather events and local laws and customs, especially before traveling abroad. See the U.S. Department of State Department of Consular Affairs website for travel advisories and information by country.

If a security or safety risk is identified, NCASES staff will consult with the applicant agency and with the Site Reviewers in deciding how to ensure that teams remain safe while meeting the goals of a thorough and objective review. NCASES may consider whether the due date for the accreditation activity needs to be delayed. If a visit is delayed, the NCASES will take action in accordance with established policies and procedures.

If conditions change after a visit has been scheduled or while a visit is underway, the Team Lead may consult with the NCASES Executive Director and the applicant agency in considering the following options:

- Adjust the visit schedule or the participation of individuals in meetings and interviews in light of local conditions; consider early departures or extended stays.
- Supplement the on-campus, in-person, interactions with video conferencing during or after the visit.

If an incident involving the safety of a Site Reviewer occurs while conducting official NCASES business, the individual and/or Team Lead should notify the NCASES office immediately.

Procedures for Reimbursement of Travel Expenses

Each Site Reviewer is required to submit an Expense Report. If a Site Reviewer has not incurred any expenses, the individual must indicate that they are not submitting any expenses and still submit the form. Site Reviewers must submit the Expense Report as soon as possible but not more than 30 calendar days after the travel event. Failure to

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submit the Expense Report within this timeframe could result in the forfeiture of reimbursement.

All expense reports must be accompanied by supporting, itemized receipts or invoices in order to comply with the minimum accounting standards established by the Internal Revenue Service and the reporting standards of NCASES. Credit card statements and bank statements may not be used in place of receipts or invoices. NCASES staff will verify reasonable and necessary expenses against itemized receipts. NCASES staff may reject unreasonable, unnecessary, or personal expenses at their discretion.

Cancellation or Postponement of Travel

If NCASES staff has notified Site Reviewers that a travel event is postponed or canceled, the Site Reviewer may submit a request for reimbursement for expenses already incurred. Site Reviewers should cancel all arrangements and attempt to obtain refunds as permitted. Appropriate documentation related to expenses already incurred and not refundable should be submitted along with the Expense Report and itemized receipts. NCASES staff may request additional documentation at their discretion.

Issue of Reimbursement Checks

Reimbursement checks will be mailed directly to the Site Reviewer or to a designated payee if indicated on the Expense Report.